Famous Hazel Squirrel

This
Book
Belongs to
Lottie Alary
From Ingel &
Daniel on 6th
Birthday

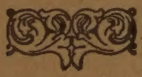
FAMOUS ANIMAL STORIES

Hazel Squirrel

AND OTHER STORIES

By

Howard B. Famous



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CONTENTS

Page

In Squirrel Town 7

Hazel and Bushy-Tail Visit Some Strange Lands 15

Mrs. Screech Owl 26

The Raccoon and the Bees . . . 41

Pinkie Whiskers 67

ILLUSTRATIONS

Little Hazel Was Playing Far Out on a Leafy Branch . (*Frontispiece*)

Page

"I'll Be Down in a Jiffy" 9

He Held Out Some Nuts to Them 13

She Rocked Them in Her Doll's Cradle 21

Mr. Bat Saw Them Huddled Together 23

Mother Squirrel Entertains Her Visitors 27

The Squirrels Go on a Picnic . . . 32

Feasting on Hazel Nuts 36

The Raccoon Watches the Boys . . 40

"Yum, Yum, but It Is Fine" . . . 48

"Oh, Coonie, Tell Me Where It Is" 51

Chuck Arrived at the Big Oak Tree 55

He Grabbed Up a Big Stick 59

HAZEL SQUIRREL

IN SQUIRREL TOWN

"COME, little sleepy-eyes, it's time to get up," said Mrs. Squirrel, one morning. But little Bushy-Tail was having such a nice dream about a wonderful tree where all kinds of nuts grew side by side on the same branch that he did not answer. Only his eyelids quivered ever so little, so his mother knew he was pretending.

"Come, come!" she repeated. "Little Hazel Squirrel is up and playing outside."

In a twinkling he had jumped out of bed and pressed his furry little nose against the window pane. Little Hazel was playing far out on a leafy branch with one eye

on Bushy-Tail's house, nestled in a forked limb close to the trunk. She waved her lovely gray tail when she saw him and began chattering very fast.

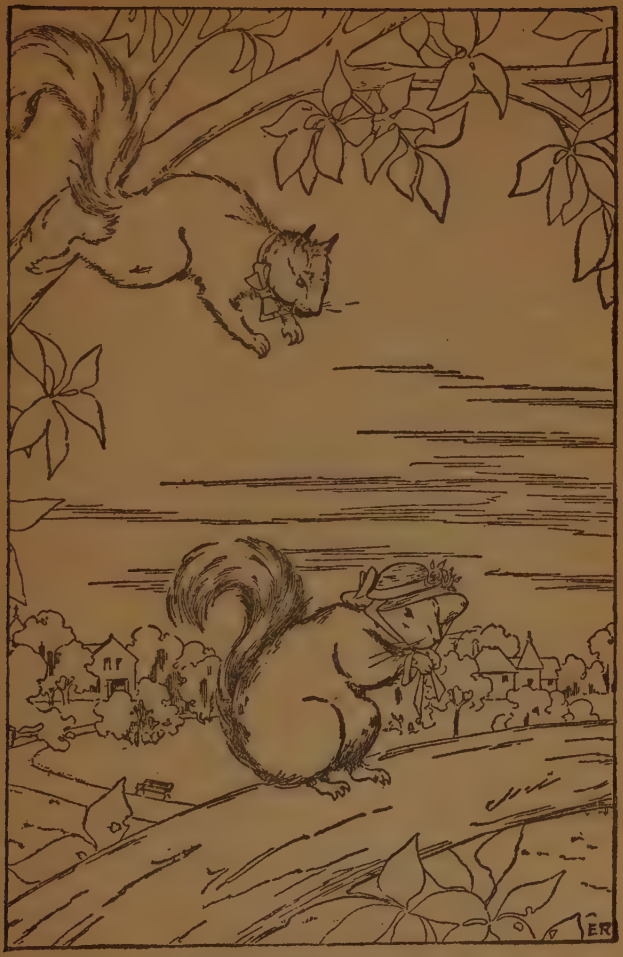
"Wait a minute," Bushy-Tail called back, "I'll be down in a jiffy."

And he was in such a hurry that he tied his tie on sideways and brushed his furry tail the wrong way, which made him look very funny. He even forgot to take a bite of the nice breakfast his mother had left on the table for him. Right through the window he bounded, instead of walking through the door as he had been taught to do, and landed close beside Hazel, far out on the leafy bough.

"Oh, Hazel," he cried, "I've had the loveliest dream!"

"You old sleepy-head," she answered, "you lay abed dreaming when you might be out playing in the fresh air."

"Hazel," Bushy-Tail began, teetering up



"I'LL BE DOWN IN A JIFFY"

and down on the branch in his excitement, "I'm sick of peanuts, aren't you?"

"No," she answered, "I love them. Mother says they make my coat thick and sleek."

They were city squirrels, you know, who lived in a park and had their daily supply of peanuts left at their door by the park-keeper.

"No, I am not sick of peanuts," she continued. "But what has that to do with your dream?"

"Everything," he went on. "Oh, Hazel, I dreamed of a most wonderful tree where all kinds of nuts—hickory, walnuts, chestnuts and hazel-nuts—grew side by side on the same branch. We must hurry and get there before they are all gone," and he jumped up so quickly that Hazel went spinning round and round the branch she was holding on to with her sharp little claws.

Now, Hazel was a good little squirrel

who always talked things over with her mother, so as they were hurrying away across the park she suddenly stopped. "I forgot to tell mother where I was going," she said.

Her play-fellow grabbed her by the tail. "It's to be a surprise," he whispered. "We will make little baskets of dry twigs and carry home enough for everybody." This sounded fine.

The pink in the sky was by now beginning to fade. Presently Mr. Sun poked his head over the hilltops far away. He saw the runaway children and he thought to give them a scare that would send them home. So he bounded out from behind a cloud and sent a long, dark shadow right across the path in front of them.

"Oh, my," cried Hazel, "what's that?"

Both children were so startled they jumped straight up in the air and landed on the other side of the dark shadow.

"Let's go home," suggested Hazel, but when they turned to go they saw their own shadows and of course they knew them. How they laughed then, for who would think of being afraid of a lifeless shadow?

By and by they met a workman. He had a dinner-pail in his hand and in his pockets peanuts for the squirrels, for every morning and night he passed through the park. Now, the good citizens of the town had made laws that no one should harm a squirrel and the squirrels knew this. So Hazel and Bushy-Tail were not afraid of the workman and when he knelt down and held out some nuts to them, they ran right up to him, chattering all the while.

Bushy-Tail took one of the nuts, cracked it with his teeth and, holding it with both hands, ate very greedily. For, you see, the sight of the nuts reminded him he had not eaten any breakfast, and suddenly he became very hungry.

Hazel was not a bit hungry, so she put

HE HELD OUT SOME NUTS TO THEM

the nut in the pocket of one of her cheeks, which made her look as if she had the mumps. Then she ran up the workman's arm and perched on his shoulder, where her soft, bushy tail brushed against his ears and tickled him in the neck.

Poor little Hazel Squirrel. Little did she think the wonderful tree they were looking for was only a dream-tree. But how was she to know that all kinds of nuts never did, nor ever can grow side by side on the same branch, save only in the wonderland we enter through the gates of sleep.

"I don't see your wonderful tree anywhere, Bushy-Tail," she said.

"I think it's down this way a little," he answered. And once more they scampered off together, chattering and waving their lovely tails.

HAZEL AND BUSHY-TAIL VISIT STRANGE LANDS

OF all nice things to do one of the very nicest is to go traveling; to see what kind of things grow in faraway places and how other folks plan their cities. My, what fun Hazel Squirrel and Bushy-Tail had! All day long they explored new trees and ran along strange fences and peered into yards where children they had never seen before were playing.

Once they ran into a garden where some little girls were having a tea-party. The children called to the squirrels and held out sweet, sticky things for them to eat. They were scampering back along the wall when a thoughtless little boy, who had not been invited to the party, threw a tiny stone at Bushy-Tail. It hit right in the center of his tail.

Bushy-Tail gave a startled little cry and jumped down off the wall, Hazel following close behind. The little girls jumped up and ran, too. They wanted to do something to help if they could. But the squirrels ran up the opposite side of a maple and were soon out of sight. Bushy-Tail was not waving his tail so proudly now. It was hurting terribly. Hazel took her blue-bordered handkerchief out and wrapped it around the hurt place as best she could.

"Oh, Bushy-Tail," she sobbed, "how I wish my mother were here. She would know just what to do for you," and great tears began to roll down her cheeks.

It made Bushy-Tail feel so badly to see his little playmate unhappy that for the minute he forgot all about his sore tail. He put his arms around her soft neck and wiped the tears away with his little red-bordered handkerchief.

"Perhaps we had better go home," he

whispered in her ear. You see, he had forgotten about his dream-tree now. So they scrambled down the tree trunk again and then it suddenly dawned on them that they had no idea where they were or in which direction the park lay.

They asked a sparrow, but she did not deign to answer them. They asked a robin, but she was hurrying home with a worm in her mouth and could only mumble something which sounded like "yeast." They asked a pussy-cat and she said if they would come home with her first she would look it up in a book she had there. But Hazel did not want to go. "For," she whispered to Bushy-Tail, "she has eyes like a witch."

So they ran on a little farther until they came to a hat lying upside down on the ground. It was warm and soft inside and Hazel thought it would be a good place for a little rest. She was beginning to feel very tired. Bushy-Tail had lost the hand-

kerchief off his tail, too, and it was hurting again. So the two little squirrels rolled themselves up into two dear, little balls and Hazel spread her lovely tail over them to keep the wind off, and before you could say "Jack Robinson" they were both sound asleep.

When Mr. Smith came back after his hat you can imagine how surprised he was to find it had a new fur lining. "How I wish Alice could see them," he thought. Then, very carefully, so as not to frighten them, he spread his coat over them and started for home with a queer shaped bundle in his arms.

"Guess what I have," he cried as his little girl ran to the door to meet him.

"Ice cream," she screamed.

"Guess again!"

"Kittens."

"You're warmer," he said, "but not right yet."

Then, as he carefully lifted up his coat, "baby squirrel," she cried, and clapped her hands and jumped up and down for joy.

Of course the ride had awakened the squirrels. They were still more frightened to be in this strange house with strange people standing around looking at them. They huddled very close together inside the hat and would not eat the nuts Alice brought them. Have you ever been so scared you could not eat?

"Don't you think they would be more comfortable in a regular bed?" Alice asked her father and he agreed heartily.

So she ran and got her doll's cradle and tucked them in carefully between the white sheets and rocked them just a little, so they would think they were in the branches of a tree and feel more at home. Alice's mother had to remind her several times it was her bed-time, too, she did so hate to leave her dear little play-fellows.

By and by Mother Moon looked in at the window. Quick as a flash both squirrels jumped out of the cradle and ran to ask her the shortest way home. They found the window just a little open. You can imagine they did not stop to say good-bye to Alice or think to thank her for the supper they had not eaten.

Outside everything looked very strange and unreal. They had never been out alone at night before. Do you know why everything looks so different at night, even though it is most as light as day? It is because the shadows the moon makes are blacker and each one seems to hide something alive.

Hazel and Bushy-Tail ran as fast as their little legs could carry them. They were too scared to even ask Mrs. Moon the shortest way home. Presently it began to rain and Mrs. Moon went inside to get out of the wet. Two little streams of tears began to roll down Hazel's cheeks. If you

SHE ROCKED THEM IN HER DOLL'S CRADLE

have never been home-sick, you have no way of knowing how unhappy these poor, little, lost squirrels were. It is a much worse pain than cutting one's finger. Something hurt Bushy-Tail inside so much he wanted to cry, too. But he had to be brave and try and comfort little Hazel. Besides, they had only one handkerchief now. You remember Hazel had tied hers around his sore tail and he had lost it.

Presently they came to the edge of a woods. But Hazel would not venture in. She was afraid some robin would think they were the "babes in the woods" and cover them with leaves. "Such queer things are happening to us now," she said.

Mr. Bat was passing by and he saw them huddled together between the rails of a fence. Thinking they were the lost children of his neighbor, Mrs. Squirrel, he hurried off to tell her.

Now, only the week before two of this poor lady's little ones had got caught in a

MR. BAT SAW THEM HUDDLED TOGETHER

trap. She had scolded, coaxed and begged the farmer's boys not to carry them off, but they had paid no attention to her. And when Mr. Bat told her what he had seen she jumped right out of bed and ran down the tree without stopping to take an umbrella or put on her rubbers even.

Of course she was disappointed when she saw only Hazel and Bushy-Tail!

"They are city squirrels," she told Mr. Bat. "We have only red ones here in the woods. I can't imagine how these little squirrels got so far from home alone."

"How worried their mothers must be," she thought to herself and that settled it. She took them by the shoulders and shook them very gently and when they opened their eyes and saw the fire-fly and Mr. Bat and Mrs. Red Squirrel, for just a moment they thought they were dreaming.

But when Mrs. Red Squirrel questioned them, all she could make out between their

sobs was that they were lost and wanted to go home.

"You poor, dear little things," she said, hugging them in her soft arms, "come home with me to-night and we will help you find your mothers in the morning."

I can tell you it seemed good to the little runaways to be among kind friends again, and when Mrs. Squirrel saw four little squirrels all curled up together in her house, she was most as happy as if they had been four red ones, instead of two red and two gray.

MRS. SCREECH OWL

IT was so much darker in the woods than in the park the little city squirrels could hardly believe it was time to get up when Mother Red Squirrel called them. But after they had washed the sleepiness out of their eyes they could see little pink patches of sky through the leaves and they knew the clock was not fast after all.

It took them much longer to dress than usual, because they had not stopped to brush their tails out the night before. Hazel's was dreadfully matted down and Bushie's was full of burs. How it did hurt when Hazel, as carefully as could be, helped him pick them out. But he bravely choked back the tears and blew his nose very hard. He did not want his new friends to think him a baby, of course.

Even their breakfast was different. They

MOTHER SQUIRREL ENTERTAINS HER VISITORS

had country beetles; nice, white mushrooms, and crisp, fresh apple seeds. And after they had eaten and eaten, Mrs. Red Squirrel asked her little guests many questions—what their names were, where they lived, and how ever did they get so far from home?

How the two little squirrels' eyes popped out as Bushy-Tail told them of their home in the park, built for them out of boards and nails. He told how the caretaker came around every morning with a cup on a long pole and left a fresh supply of peanuts on their back porch, and he told of the wonderful dream he had had about a tree where all kinds of nuts grew side by side on the same branch. "I was so tired of peanuts," he added, "I set out to find the tree—but sowehow—got—lost," and then his voice became so shaky he couldn't tell any more.

Mother Red Squirrel helped him to another fat beetle and said as soon as she had her work done she would see what she

could do about it. "So many of the wood folks are moving south for the winter," she said. "I am sure I can find someone who will be going your way."

Now, Mrs. Screech Owl had seen Mrs. Red Squirrel hurry through the rain the night before with neither umbrella nor rubbers. So she said to herself, "This looks very queer. I will wait opposite the squirrel house, for I must know all."

And presently the entire woods was awakened by Mrs. Screech Owl's shrill voice calling, "Extra, extra! Mrs. Red Squirrel has city cousins visiting her." Of course this was not true. But "extras" seldom are accurate.

Anyway, Mrs. Red Squirrel thought she never would get her work done. You would not believe me if I should tell you how many times the door bell rang. First her neighbor on one side dropped in to borrow a pattern. Then a neighbor on the other side came over to return a book. Then

friends from all over the woods just happened by, and always after a second or two they would say, "I hear you have company from the city."

And then Mother Red Squirrel would have to stop work and tell all about it. But the worst of it was nobody knew the way back to the park.

Pretty soon Mother Red Squirrel had an idea. "Mr. Bat is a great traveler," she said, "even if he does go to places only at night, I'll ask him." Now, nobody likes to be waked out of a sound sleep to be asked questions. Mr. Bat blinked his eyes very hard, though by that time the sun was too bright for him to see a thing, and at first he said he didn't know the way either. Then Mrs. Red Squirrel flattered him a little and told how she had asked everybody the way to the park and nobody knew. "I felt sure you'd know," she added, at which Mr. Bat remembered he did and promised to take the little runa-

ways home, just as soon as it should be dark enough!

When Bushy-Tail and Hazel learned that they were going home that night, they jumped up and down for joy. I forgot to tell you Mrs. Red Squirrel's two children were called Pinky and Rusty. They were such lively, frolicsome children that you just couldn't help but laugh to see them, and pretty soon Bushy-Tail and Hazel had forgotten all about how their parents must be worrying.

"How would it be if we all went on a picnic today?" asked Mother Red Squirrel. "I know where there are hazel nuts." I need not tell you what they answered. So she gave them each a little basket and took two herself and whisk—they were springing through the air, leaping from the ends of teetering branches or spinning along the tops of fences in a jiffy

By and by they came to a lot of bushes and Mrs. Red Squirrel put down her bas-

THE SQUIRRELS GO ON A PICNIC

ket. "Let's not stop here," cried Bushy-Tail. "See, the burs don't open a bit, they are much too green to eat."

But Mrs. Red Squirrel said, "If we wait for the wind to rattle them out for us, chipmunks and children from over the hill will not leave us one. If we even wait until the burs open, crows and jays will carry them off."

Then she showed them how to cut off the little clusters of burs and soon they had their baskets full. What fun that picnic was. There were so many new things to see in that woods. Bushy-Tail kept crying, "Oh, look here, Hazel," and she was kept busy calling, "Come quick, Bushy-Tail."

Bushy-Tail had one eye open for the wonderful tree where all kinds of nuts grew side by side on the same branch. He could remember just how it looked in his dream, so he felt sure he would know it the minute he espied it. "If there isn't one

in this wonderful woods," he was beginning to think, "I don't believe there is one anywhere."

All of a sudden Hazel and Bushy-Tail heard their little playfellows give a scared little cry. They looked around quickly, but could see nothing to be frightened at —only a man carrying a heavy black stick against his shoulder. He kept stealing up nearer, and Hazel and Bushy-Tail kept very still watching him.

"I think he has some peanuts for us," said Hazel Squirrel.

"What do we want of peanuts now, come on," said Bushy-Tail, and they ran around the trunk of the tree. Just then a terrifying "whiz" went past their ears followed by a deafening "bang." They were so frightened they ran and ran, and did not stop until they were all out of breath.

It was the only time they ever had even seen a man with a gun. After that they never took nuts from men carrying sticks.

That afternoon Mrs. Red Squirrel made Hazel and Bushy-Tail take a little nap. "You know you will be up late to-night," she said. Mr. Bat had not forgotten his promise and just as soon as it began to get dark he was knocking at the door. He said there would be a moon, so they need not bother a fire-fly to go too.

Mrs. Red Squirrel and her two children went as far as the edge of the woods with them. "Now you know the way you must come often," they called after Bushy-Tail and Hazel. "Don't forget to come and see us, too, and thank you for the nice time," they called back. You see, they had been well trained and did not forget their manners.

"I think I should like to live in the park," said Rusty to his mother. "Bushy says there are no traps there or bad men with guns." Mrs. Red Squirrel was thinking she would like to have her groceries delivered, too, so she answered, "I think I

FEASTING ON HAZEL NUTS

shall speak to your father about it to-night."

When Bushy-Tail and little Hazel Squirrel finally reached the edge of the park it was very late and they were very tired indeed. But when they got within sight of their homes and saw the lights in the windows they began to run again anyway.

Do you think their mothers were glad to see them once more? Well, was your mother glad to see you that day she thought you were lost, when you really were not? And if you still want to know if Bushy-Tail ever found the wonderful tree where all kinds of nuts grew side by side on the same branch, all I can tell you is that they never found it in the park and that they never ran away again.

THE RACCOON WATCHES THE BOYS

THE RACCOON AND THE BEES

A RACCOON was dozing, perched up in a big tree one fine, bright summer day. He lay on a broad limb high up in the tree. There was a fresh breeze stirring, and he swayed to and fro with the branches.

He had been rocking on this lofty perch for some time, with his eyes half closed, when he was roused by the shouting of some small, bare-footed boys who were playing in a hayfield close by. Coonie, as he was called for short, after yawning and stretching for some minutes, finally shifted his position so as to see the boys. He had watched them often from the top of a tree, and he always enjoyed the fun, because they did such queer things.

It was some minutes before he could find out what they were doing, but at last he discovered that they had found a bumble-bees' nest. They had long paddles in their hands and were running around, yelling, and waving the paddles frantically. Occasionally one of the boys screamed, and then several of the others would run toward him, all beating the air with their paddles.

Coonie watched very closely and saw one boy run up to the hive, give it a quick poke, and then scamper away. With every poke at the hive, a number of bees would fly out of the opening and sail away on the air.

Finally a small boy approached the hive and gave it a hard poke. Instantly about a dozen bees swarmed out, and the boy started to run. He had gone but half a dozen feet, however, when he tripped and fell, and by the way he rolled and kicked,

it was plain to be seen that the bees were getting the better of him.

It was great fun watching them, and Coonie decided that he would get a nearer view, so he crawled down the tree in a hurry and ran to the big oak at the edge of the field. From there he could get a full view of the battle. He chuckled to himself as he thought of the fun he was having all by himself.

The battle between the boys and the bees was raging furiously by this time. The boys charged time after time, and with each attack became bolder and bolder, until finally Coonie saw that they were winning. The plucky little bees fought bravely to defend their home, but the boys were too strong for them, and one by one they fell and were crushed or beaten to pieces with the paddles.

After two or three pokes at the hive to make sure that none of the bees remained,

a great shout went up from the boys who surrounded the deserted nest.

Children, have you ever seen a wild bees' nest—a real bumble-bees' home?

They are nearly always built on the ground, and are made of little pieces of grass piled and woven together into a little mound. At the very top there is a small hole which is used as the doorway through which the bees enter. The wall is not very thick, but is put together tightly so the wind will not blow it away, and it is hollow.

It is in this mound that the bees store their honey for the winter. During the warm summer days they work hard, carrying tiny drops of honey which they gather from the flowers and storing it so they will have something to eat during the cold weather.

When the cold winds come, in the fall and winter, and the flowers are dead, the little workers stop their labor and gather

together in the home they have been preparing all summer. When the snow comes, the little grass storehouse is buried snug and warm underneath the white blanket.

It was just such a nest as this that Coonie watched the boys robbing of its treasure. Poor little bees! All their hard work had been in vain, and they had even lost their little lives in the brave effort to protect their winter's food supply.

But even from his hiding place Coonie could see that the boys had not won the battle without some losses. Big lumps were beginning to swell up on their faces and arms, and the little boy who had tripped and fallen could hardly see because his eyes were nearly swollen shut.

The boys tore away the mound and took out the honey, layer by layer, and squeezed out the golden syrup. Just as they were licking the last drops from their sticky fingers, Coonie saw a man walking

towards them. When he was near enough, he began talking to them in an angry way.

"Why, Mr. Jones," Coonie heard one boy say, "you don't use bumble-bees' honey, do you?"

"No, boys, I don't use the honey myself," "but I don't want you to kill the bees or rob their nests so they will have to starve. Bees do a great deal of good on the farm."

"What good are bumble-bees?" one of the boys asked.

"Why, they do a lot of good. They distribute the pollen from the heads of the clover, and that makes the seed mature and develop."

This was news to Coonie, for he never knew before that bumble-bees were of any use, but then he had never had much to do with them. One day when he was playing he had caught a bee in his little paws and had received a sting, and he never forgot how sore his paws were and how they

swelled so that he was unable to climb for several days. Since that time he had always made it a practice to move away when a bee came too close.

After the boys were gone and Farmer Jones had gone back to his house, Coonie decided that he would go over to the field and see what the inside of the bees' nest looked like.

As he approached the field where the battle had taken place, much to his surprise, he saw his friend Woodchuck snooping around among the ruins. When Coonie reached him, he sat up on his hind feet and began licking his paws.

"Hello, Chuck," Coonie said. "What are you doing? Why, your face is a sight. My, such a dirty face. Why, Chuck, I am surprised," and he noticed the greedy look in Chuck's eyes.

"Yum! yum!" was the only reply he received and Chuck began picking around in the grass.

"YUM, YUM BUT IT IS FINE"

"I say, Chuck," Coonie said again, "what are you doing?"

"Doing?" echoed Chuck. "Why, this is the best food I have had for a long time, Coonie. My face may be a little sticky, but it can be washed, so I don't care. Such a treat as I have had! I am sorry you missed it all. I saw some boys capering and scampering around here this afternoon, and as soon as they left I came over to see what it was all about, and this is what I found," and Chuck held up a small yellow pod. "Just taste one, Coonie, it is sweeter than any berry I ever tasted. Yum, yum, but it is fine."

"Hum!" sniffed Coonie. "It may suit your taste, but honey is much too sticky for me."

"Well, I'm glad you don't want any," Chuck replied. "You always were rather particular, but I am only Chuck anyhow, and as some people call me a hog—a

ground-hog, you know—I might as well live up to my name."

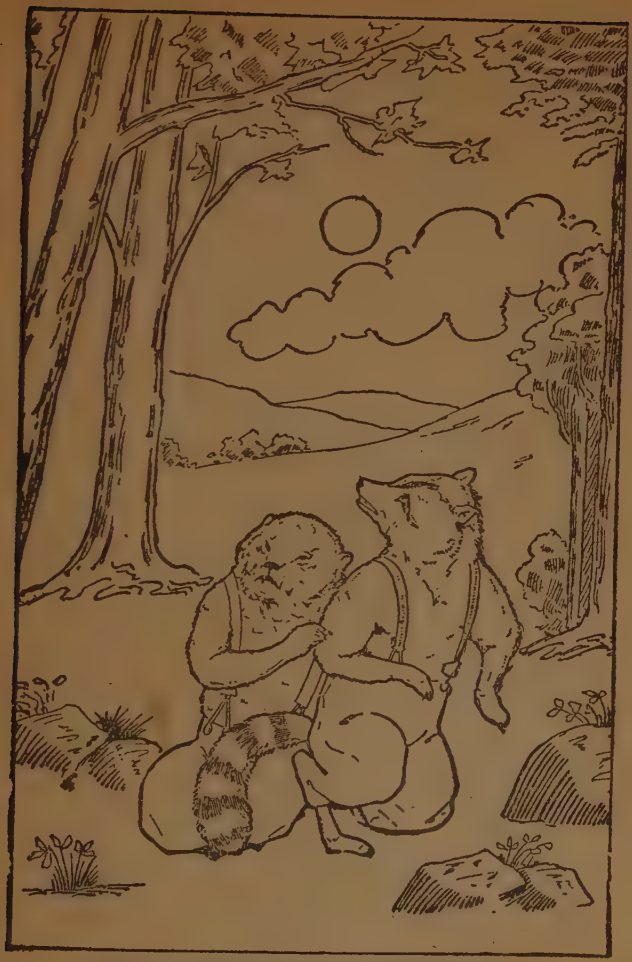
"But, Chuck, just go down to the brook and look at your face."

Chuck, seeing that his supply of sweets was exhausted, did as Coonie suggested and waddled toward the brook, Coonie accompanying him.

As Chuck was washing his face and paws, Coonie remarked that he knew where there was plenty of the kind of honey Chuck had been feasting on. "Only," he added, "it is much cleaner than what you have been eating."

"Oh, Coonie, tell me where it is, won't you, please?" cried Chuck, stopping his toilet and catching up Coonie's paw. "I just dearly love it, and I'll be your lifelong friend if you will tell me where it is so I can get some more."

Now Coonie felt very mischievous, and he thought of a plan that would give him some fun.



"OH, COONIE TELL ME WHERE IT IS"

"Why, Chuck," he replied, "you would not expect me to tell you where all this honey is, would you? You would go eat it all up in one night. You are such a 'hoggie' you know."

"Oh, be a good friend, Coonie, and tell me. If you only knew how badly I want some more."

"Well, I'll tell you," Coonie said, "but there may be some danger in getting it."

"I'll never stop for the danger," Chuck boasted.

"You remember Farmer Jones, don't you?"

"I should say I do. I'll never forget the whole family. Do you remember the time we were caught stealing the corn in his crib last fall? And, oh, that fierce dog! Indeed, I never will forget him. If it is Farmer Jones' honey, it is perfectly safe, for it makes me shiver to even think of that dog, Jack."

"Oh, I knew that you would be afraid," taunted Coonie. "Tomorrow is Saturday, and the Jones always go to town on Saturday. I have been planning to go over and give myself a little treat."

"But, Coonie, how about the dog?"

"Oh, he goes to town with them. I have watched them from the tree where I live, and they never miss going on Saturday afternoons, and taking the dog with them."

"But how do you know where the honey is, Coonie?"

"How? Why, I have often sampled it."

Now Coonie told a falsehood when he said he had eaten some of the honey, but he was anxious to have some fun, and so he resorted to a falsehood in order to carry out his plans. This plan never pays, as you will see later.

"Have you really sampled it, Coonie?" Chuck asked. "And is it good, and is it very hard to get?"

Chuck was all excitement, for he could not get rid of the memory of the taste of the honey he had just been eating.

"'Hard to get?'" repeated Coonie. "Why, Chuck, there are great piles of it, and knowing the grounds as I do, it will be easy to get it. Now you meet me tomorrow and I'll take you over with me. Meet me by the big oak tree in the corner of the woods, just after noon tomorrow. I must leave you now, because I am going fishing tonight with some of the other coons that live near me. Good-bye until tomorrow," and Coonie went away with a chuckle.

The next afternoon, Chuck arrived at the big oak tree in the corner of the woods. But there was no Coonie waiting for him. He walked around the tree several times to make sure and then mounted a nearby stump. The woods were very quiet save for the droning of insects, and the sun that shone between the leaves beat down

CHUCK ARRIVED AT THE BIG OAK TREE

very hot. Before Chuck knew it he had fallen asleep at his post.

When Coonie came trotting up and saw Chuck perched there fast asleep he said to himself: "What a fine chance to play a trick." So he picked a long blade of grass with a feathery end and crept up from behind so carefully that not a twig cracked. When he was within arm's reach he tickled poor Chuck way up his nose.

Chuck waked with a start and bounded right into the air, landing at some distance off. He had no idea that someone had played a trick on him.

"What ails you, Chuck?" Coonie cried, running up, with a friendly, anxious expression on his face, for Chuck was almost sneezing his head off.

"Guess—a—nasty old—fly—crawled up —my—nose," Chuck managed to get out between sneezes.

"Too bad, old chap," said Coonie, giving him a friendly pat on the shoulder. "Come

along with me and we'll get some honey, and that will make you feel better." Still sneezing, Chuck trotted off with Coonie across the fields.

When they reached Farmer Jones's barnyard everything seemed very quiet and sleepy around there.

"Is that where the honey is kept?" whispered Chuck, as Coonie took a peep in at the barn-door.

"No," answered Coonie, "I just wanted to see if the double-buggy was there. It is not, and now I feel perfectly sure they have all gone to town and taken the dog with them."

Then they felt quite safe. Very boldly they walked around to the gate in the yard where Coonie said the honey was. "Hurrah," he cried, "someone has left the gate open for us. They must have been expecting us!"

"I have never been in here before," said

Chuck. "What are all those square white boxes along the fence?"

"Those are called bee-hives," Coonie answered, a little proudly, to think he knew so much. "The honey is kept inside."

"But how do we get at it?" asked Chuck. "Those little holes in front look hardly big enough for me to get my paw through, much less my head and shoulders."

"Oh," laughed Coonie, "how stupid you are! You just go up and knock very loudly at the door and when a bee comes out, you ask if he hasn't something to eat for a poor fellow, who has come a long way and is very hungry and tired. But should he pay no attention to you, hit him with your paw. This will frighten the others so they will bring out all the honey you wish and leave it there on the ledge for you. Come on, I'm hungry, aren't you, Chuck?"

"Am I?" said Chuck. "Well, I should say so." He was licking his jaws in memory

HE GRABBED UP A BIG STICK

of the little feast he had had the day before.

Coonie looked at Chuck out of the corners of his mischievous eyes, but Chuck never guessed he was laughing at him when he added, "I'll take a hive at this end, you can have one at that. Let's hurry."

Chuck was in a hurry indeed. Already he felt sure he could smell the honey, so he left Coonie and ran toward the hive at the end of the row in high spirits. But before he knocked on it he stopped and looked back. He wanted to see how Coonie was getting along.

Now, Coonie did not really want any honey. All he wanted to do was to play a joke on his friend, but it very often happens that the practical joker gets the worst of it in the end. And as Coonie stepped up to the hive and pretended to knock, he put his paw right down on top of the Queen Bee, whom he did not see sunning herself on the ledge.

The Queen Bee has no sting, you know, and cannot defend herself. She is by no means helpless, however. She has, in fact, an entire army ready to fight for her at a moment's call.

When the other bees heard their Queen's cry for help they all rushed out of their hives and began at once attacking Coonie. They buzzed angrily around him and burrowed into his fur until he rolled over and over on the ground, doubled up with the pain.

This was what Chuck saw when he turned around to find out how Coonie was getting along! He grabbed up a big stick, but he soon saw there was nothing he could do to help.

He also saw that the bees in their mad attack had left their fort unguarded. So he stuck his paw inside the door and broke off a good sized piece of comb full of nice, yellow honey. Then he started for the woods again as fast as he could.

Coonie did not see Chuck as he shot past him a few minutes later, trying to shake off the bees that still clung to him, as he ran. And a few days later, when they met down by the brook, Coonie pretended not to see him.

"Howdy, Coonie," Chuck called out in his cheery way. "Where are you going so fast? Well, I never," he added, noticing Coonie's bumps and bandages. "Have you been in a fight?"

"Just a little fuss with Farmer Jones's dog. He's twice my size and a regular bully," Coonie answered, as he brushed by Chuck in such a hurry that he did not hear the latter call after him.

"Say, old friend, meet me by the big oak tree in the corner of the woods tomorrow and we'll go after some more of that good honey!"

It was Chuck's turn to laugh now, for "he laughs best who laughs last," you know.

PINKIE WHISKERS

CHAPTER I

LITTLE Pinkie Whiskers was born in a big city and lived with his Father Gray, Mother Gray and two little sisters, Twinkle and Winkle, in a tin box, which was hidden under a big garbage can.

Mother Gray had hunted and found nice scraps of cotton and bits of straw. With these she made a soft, warm nest and here they all lived as cozy and happy as could be.

One day a poor, old man came down the alley and looked in all the garbage cans to see what he could find that he might sell, for that is the way he got his money to buy his food and shelter.

When he came to the garbage can over our family of rats, he did not see their little home and pushed their box right over.

Pinkie Whiskers, Twinkle and Winkle were all alone. They fell out onto the brick pavement and began to cry. Oh, my, how they cried!

Mother Gray and Father Gray were out getting a nice supper for them all. Mother Gray heard her babies cry and came running home as fast as she could.

When she saw what had happened, she was very distressed. She quieted her babies and nestled down with them in the fence corner.

Father Gray said, "Never mind, my dears, I will find you a nice, new home," and away he went.

Bye and bye he returned and told them with joy that he had found a splendid place for them to live. It was just inside the door of a big apartment building.

Father Gray and Mother Gray gathered together all the pieces of their nest and carried them in their mouths. Then, keeping very close to the fence, they started for their new home.

This new home was a nice square place under the floor and far enough back so that a cat or a dog could not reach them. Soon they were settled and Pinkie Whiskers, Twinkle and Winkle were fast asleep.

In the morning, just as Mrs. Gray was washing her children's faces, they heard a bell ring right in front of their door.

To their great alarm their home began to tremble and then move. Yes, really move. Up and up it went, faster and faster.

Oh, how frightened they were! All at once their home stopped. They heard people talking and then down, down they went. My, what a queer feeling it gave them!

They heard a voice say, "Your elevator is running fine today, Tom."

"An elevator!" cried Mother Gray—"Our home is in an elevator. We must move at once for we cannot be always going up and down."

Father Gray just laughed and laughed, then said: "Well, well, I have heard of elevators, but I never expected to have a ride in one and now we have a home in one. That is a good joke, ha! ha!"

Mother Gray said, "You may laugh all you wish, but I am tired of city life, you are never sure of a safe home. We will go to the country to live."

"Oh, oh," cried Pinkie Whiskers, "let us go and live with Uncle Whiskers in the cheese factory."

"A very good idea," said Father Gray, and straightway they started for the country.

When they arrived at the cheese fac-

tory, they found it dark and deserted, but Father Gray discovered a hole and soon they had all crawled in through this hole. Mother Gray selected a great, big round cheese to live in. Father Gray made an entrance into it and very soon the tired rats were in bed in the cheese.

The next day Pinkie Whiskers, Winkle and Twinkle went out in the meadow to explore and they found a net, which some boy had lost.

Pinkie Whiskers said, "You just watch me catch that butterfly in this net!"

He swiftly ran after the butterfly, but when the butterfly saw Pinkie Whiskers coming, he thought how nice it would be to have a ride on Pinkie Whiskers' back, so he flew after him.

Now, Pinkie Whiskers did not know much about butterflies and he thought this butterfly was chasing him.

So Pinkie Whiskers started to run for home.

"Don't let him catch me," begged Pinkie Whiskers.

Winkle and Twinkle took out their little handkerchiefs and waved them fast and hard. The butterfly was so amazed at the sight, that he forgot about Pinkie Whiskers and flew away.

CHAPTER II

PINKIE WHISKERS ran to Winkle and Twinkle. He was so frightened that he hid behind them. Twinkle laughed and said:

"Do not hide, for the butterfly has gone and anyway it was as afraid of us as you were of it. Butterflies are perfectly harmless. They do not sting or bite. They are as gentle and timid as they are beautiful."

Pinkie Whiskers looked in every direction, but he could not see the butterfly, so he shook himself and ran about once more. He was glad to know that butterflies were harmless, for he might meet one again.

"Look, look! what is that?" cried Winkle as he pointed to a fat, brown, furry animal which was coming slowly toward them.

"I do not know," replied Twinkle. "Don't you think that we had better go now?"

"No, indeed," said Pinkie Whiskers, who had suddenly become very brave. "I want to wait and see what kind of an animal he is."

When the fat, brown, furry animal was near enough to hear, Pinkie Whiskers called out:

"Hello! who are you?"

"I am Sammy Woodchuck. I live here in the meadow. You look like strangers. Where do you live?" he inquired.

"Our names are Twinkle Gray, Winkle Gray and Pinkie Whiskers Gray," replied Pinkie Whiskers. "We live in the cheese factory."

"Why, that is strange, that is strange," said Sammy Woodchuck. "You must be relatives of Uncle Whiskers. I have heard him speak of you. Welcome to the country."

"Thank you very much for your welcome," replied Pinkie Whiskers, for Mother Gray had taught her children to be very polite.

"Why do you call our Uncle Whiskers, your Uncle Whiskers," inquired Twinkle. "Is he related to you also?"

Sammy Woodchuck threw back his fat head and laughed until his eyes were full of tears. "No, no!" he cried. "He is not related to me. How could a rat and a woodchuck be related? Everyone calls him Uncle Whiskers because we all love him. He is so kind and good to us all. You see I have known him all my life and 'Uncle' is my pet name for him. You ask any of the animals about here and they will tell you the same thing."

"That is very nice," said Pinkie Whiskers. "When I get old, I hope everyone will love me enough to call me 'Uncle.' I shall try and be good and kind like Uncle Whiskers."

"Won't you come home with me?" urged Sammy Woodchuck. "It is just a nice walk from here."

"Yes, we would love to go home with you," cried the three little brothers all at once. As they walked along they came to a beautiful tree and at the foot of this tree lay a shiny new axe.

Pinkie Whiskers ran and picked it up. He had never seen anything like it, so he turned it over and over and inquired:

"What is this wonderful thing and what is it for?"

"It is an axe," replied Sammy Woodchuck. "It is very sharp and Farmer Gale uses it to cut down trees. You see he has already started to chop this tree down. He must have been called away and I am sure that he intends to return soon or he would not have left his axe here."

"I will help him chop down this tree," said Pinkie Whiskers.

He took off his little red coat and hung

it on a stick, which Farmer Gale had stuck in the ground. Then he put his brown cap on top of his little red coat, rolled up his shirt sleeves and began his work.

He swung the axe high above his head and brought it down against the tree with a great bang! He looked and to his disappointment saw that he had not cut even a tiny chip.

"I will try again," he vowed. "What others have done, I can do."

He chopped and chopped at the big tree until he was rewarded by bright, yellow chips flying through the air.

Winkle, Twinkle and Sammy Woodchuck stood by and watched him with great admiration. Sammy Woodchuck said:

"You are doing splendid work, Pinkie Whiskers. I will take some of these chips home with me and put them across my front door. I always use the back door. It is more safe."

CHAPTER III

"WHY do you bother to have a front door if you only pile sticks in front of it and never use it?" inquired Twinkle.

"Just to fool Farmer Gale's dog and any other animal, which might try to catch me. While they were digging at my front door, I could slip out my back door and escape," replied Sammy Woodchuck.

"Has Farmer Gale's dog ever tried to catch you?" asked Pinkie Whiskers.

"Oh, yes, indeed, many times," answered Sammy Woodchuck. "One time I was fast asleep when I heard a sniff, sniff at my front door. At first I thought that it must be part of a dream.

"I rubbed my eyes, sat up and listened. In a moment I heard the sniff, sniff again. This time it was very loud and near. Then

I heard scratching and digging. I knew that dog, for I had seen him many times and I knew that he never stopped until he got what he was after.

"I could hear him digging so fast that I knew it would not be long before he would be right in my house. I began to move slowly and quietly for the back door. I got out safely and was running across the meadow when the dog saw me in the moonlight and gave chase.

"Of course I did not have a chance with him for I am so fat. He was gaining every moment and I was so tired and out of breath that I thought every step would be my last one, when a cat ran right between us.

"Now, the dog hated the cat worse than he did me, so he gave chase to the cat. Away they both ran at a terrible speed. I knew that the cat could run faster than the dog and would soon be safe and sound up a tree, so I rested a moment and then

went over to Willie Woodchuck's and spent the rest of the night."

"My, that was a dreadful experience," said Pinkie Whiskers and he shuddered.

"Did you ever live in that house again?" inquired Winkle.

"Oh, no, indeed," replied Sammy Woodchuck. "That dog was sure to go back and he would never rest until he had dug clear through my home. No, indeed, I could not live there again. I stayed with Willie Woodchuck for a long time until I felt safe to find another spot to build my home."

Pinkie Whiskers did not chop while Sammy Woodchuck was telling his story. He just leaned upon his axe and listened. Now he said:

"Never mind, Sammy Woodchuck, you need never be afraid in your home again. I will chop down this tree and put it across your front door. No one can dig into your house then."

The tree was so big and Pinkie Whis-

kers was so little that Sammy Woodchuck had to smile to himself at the idea of his moving it. However, he did not let Pinkie Whiskers see him smile, for he did not want to hurt his feelings. He said:

"You are very kind, my dear friend, and I appreciate your wish to help me, but my home is too far away for you to drag that big tree to it."

"Poof! poof!" snorted Pinkie Whiskers. "I will show you what I can do."

He chopped away so fast and swung the axe so high and rapidly that it was just a shiny streak rushing through the air. Suddenly he missed his aim and the axe came down on his toe instead of the tree.

"Oh, my toe!" he cried. "I've cut my toe."

Poor Pinkie Whiskers! He danced about on one foot in circles, while he held the other foot in his hand.

Sammy Woodchuck caught hold of him

and threw him to the ground. Twinkle quickly slipped off the shoe which was badly cut and Winkle pulled off his little white sock.

They all anxiously looked at the toe and to their relief found that it was only cut a very little. In fact it looked as if it had just been scratched.

"We must bind it up with something," said Sammy Woodchuck.

"Here is my handkerchief," cried Twinkle.

"Here is mine and it is perfeetly clean. Please use it," urged Winkle.

"I will need both handkerchiefs," said Sammy Woodchuck.

So he took both handkerchiefs and wound them very neatly around Pinkie Whiskers' toe and foot.

Pinkie Whiskers felt himself to be quite a hero. His toe did not hurt him any more and he liked all of this sympathy and attention.

CHAPTER IV

PINKIE WHISKERS liked to be a hero so well that he limped about and grunted when he stepped on his foot, even though it did not hurt him. It was so nice to see how sorry everyone looked.

Suddenly he heard a voice above him say, "Too bad! too bad!"

"Why, hello!" cried Sammy Woodchuck. "Where did you come from, Billy Jay?"

"I have been right here in this tree all the time you and your little friends have been here," laughed Billy Jay.

"Why didn't you come down and visit with us before, instead of hiding up amongst the leaves," demanded Sammy Woodchuck rather crossly.

"Because I wanted to see if Pinkie Whis-

kers could really chop down this tree," replied Billy Jay.

"Of course I can chop it down. You just watch me," boasted Pinkie Whiskers. "If I were you, I would leave the tree, for it won't take me long to chop it in two and you might take a tumble."

Pinkie Whiskers forgot all about his toe and bandaged foot. He worked as he had never worked before. He became very warm and thirsty. He called to Twinkle:

"Won't you please bring me some water. I am choking."

"I would be glad to, if I knew where to find it," replied Twinkle.

"There is a creek just beyond those trees," said Billy Jay. "You can take his cap and fill it with water and bring it back to him. I will go with you and show you the way."

"I will go along also and help Twinkle carry the water back for Pinkie Whiskers.

I am sure that cap would be very heavy if it were full of water," said Winkle.

"Umph! umph!" grunted Sammy Woodchuck. "You have very kind and thoughtful brothers."

Just then they saw Uncle Whiskers coming across the meadow with a pitch-fork in his hand.

"He must be after some hay to put in his nest," said Sammy Woodchuck.

Pinkie Whiskers gave a mighty blow at the tree with his axe and turned to look at Uncle Whiskers. It was a fatal mistake, for that last blow chopped the tree in two and it began to sway and totter.

"Run, Pinkie Whiskers, run!" screamed Sammy Woodchuck.

Pinkie Whiskers dropped his axe and ran. Alas! he ran in the wrong direction. As he looked back over his shoulder he saw that the tree was falling right upon him.

"I wish I had run away sooner," thought Pinkie Whiskers.

Uncle Whiskers saw his danger and shouted, "Dodge to the side, dodge to the side!"

But poor Pinkie Whiskers was so confused that he did not hear. He just ran and ran as fast as his legs could carry him. All the time the tree was falling and in an instant more it would have crashed down and crushed Pinkie Whiskers, had it not been for Billy Jay.

When Billy Jay saw what was happening, he did not say a word, just flew like a streak and grabbed Pinkie Whiskers by his long tail and jerked him out of the way. No, not entirely out of the way, for it was too late for that, but far enough out of the way so that the tree trunk missed him and he was only caught in the branches and covered with green leaves.

"Oh! oh!" cried Twinkle.

"Oh! oh!" cried Winkle. "Our little brother will be killed. Oh! oh!"

They dropped the cap which was full of water and ran to the spot where they had seen Pinkie Whiskers disappear.

Billy Jay came wriggling out and said, "Pinkie Whiskers is all right. Just let him rest where he is for awhile. He is only tired out from running and from fright."

"Yes, Billy Jay is right. We will let him rest and catch his breath," said Uncle Whiskers.

It was very hard for Winkle and Twinkle to accept this advice, but they had been taught to obey their elders, so they only looked at one another and stayed where they were.

CHAPTER V

SUDDENLY they heard a sweet, gentle voice calling, "Oh, please come here, oh, please come here."

They all looked high and low, but they could see no one. Uncle Whiskers cried, "Who are you and where are you? We hear you but we cannot see you."

"I am the Tree-Fairy and I am right here in the stump of this tree," came the reply.

They all rushed over to the tree and, sure enough, there was the most beautiful creature they had ever seen. She was lying on her back and her wings were caught in the bark of the stump.

"Won't you please help me to free my wings," she begged.

"You must tell us how we can do it

without tearing them," said Sammy Woodchuck. "I fear that I am far too clumsy to touch them anyway."

Uncle Whiskers looked at the lovely, delicate wings and said, "I can gnaw the bark away from them."

"Please let me help you," begged Winkle.

"And please let me help also," begged Twinkle. "My teeth are as sharp as needles."

"My bill is very sharp and while you gnaw, I will pick the bark away. I promise to be very careful," said Billy Jay.

So they all set to work and the Tree-Fairy smiled upon them. Her smile was so full of love that each little animal felt his heart beat faster and was even more eager to free her wings quickly.

"It is perfectly wonderful that Pinkie Whiskers did not cut you in two when he chopped down the tree. We had no idea that you were in it," said Uncle Whiskers.

The Tree-Fairy laughed a soft, silvery laugh and answered, "No, of course you did not know that I was here. When I am free I will tell you all about how I came to be here."

Just then Billy Jay picked away a big piece of bark and the Tree-Fairy slowly but surely pulled one wing free.

Uncle Whiskers, Twinkle and Winkle worked all the harder and faster and soon Twinkle cried:

"I think you can move your wing now, dear Tree-Fairy. Try to move it just a tiny bit."

The Tree-Fairy needed no urging. Very gently and slowly she pulled her wing out from under the bark. Just to show her little friends that she could use them as well as ever, she fluttered them about.

They were so thin that you could see through them and they sparkled and shone in the sunshine like silver.

"Can't you get up now?" asked Sammy Woodchuck.

"I will try," replied the Tree-Fairy.

She tried and tried all in vain. She could move, but she could not rise. At last she said:

"My foot is caught. I am so sorry, dear friend, but I cannot leave this stump until my foot is free. It is so far down in the stump that I am afraid you will have a very hard time to loosen it."

She was right. It seemed for awhile that it was impossible to loosen it. Billy Jay picked and picked. Twinkle and Winkle gnawed and gnawed, but all of their efforts seemed of no use.

Finally Uncle Whiskers said, "I will take the axe and chop away the outside of the stump."

"I will take the pitch-fork and lift the soft pulp away," cried Sammy Woodchuck.

So they worked and worked until they had broken the stump apart and the Tree-Fairy was free once more.

As she stepped out into the green meadow, she was so happy that she danced and as she danced, her little silver slippers twinkled and glittered.

"Isn't she wonderful?" whispered Winkle to Twinkle.

"Yes. She is so lovely that I am afraid she will not stay with us," whispered Twinkle to Winkle.

Uncle Whiskers looked and looked at the Tree-Fairy until his eyes were almost blinded by her sparkle in the sunshine. He said:

"Please come over here under the shade of this tree, where we can look at you all we wish and then tell us how you came to be in that tree."

CHAPTER VI

THE Tree-Fairy danced over and sat down under the tree with Uncle Whiskers, Winkle, Twinkle and Sammy Woodchuck. Billy Jay did not care to sit down. He just hopped around and around the Tree-Fairy and stared at her.

In the meantime Pinkie Whiskers had caught his breath and was rested. He tried to get up, but found that a branch of the tree held him down. He wiggled and twisted but he could not rise.

"Help! help!" called Pinkie Whiskers.

"My goodness!" cried Uncle Whiskers. "We forgot all about that blessed Pinkie Whiskers. Come we must help him."

They all rushed over to the tree and there was Pinkie Whiskers lying on his back and kicking as hard as he could.

"Now just keep perfectly still and we will break the branches away, then you can get up," said Uncle Whiskers.

Pinkie Whiskers was so glad to see Winkle, Twinkle, Uncle Whiskers, Sammy Woodchuck and Billy Jay that he cried.

"Now, now!" said Uncle Whiskers. "You eat one of those big apples that are just waiting right by your hand for you and you will feel better."

"When I woke up, it was all so still that I thought you had all gone home and left me," sobbed Pinkie Whiskers.

"We are here," cried Twinkle.

"We are here," cried Winkle, "and we will have you out of that tree in a moment."

Already Sammy Woodchuck and Uncle Whiskers had broken the branches away and now they lifted Pinkie Whiskers to his feet.

Pinkie Whiskers was all smiles as he

stood in the green meadow again, but he said:

"I shall never cut down a tree again. This one nearly killed me."

"You owe your life to Billy Jay. It was Billy who caught your tail and pulled you out from under the falling tree trunk just in time or you surely would have been crushed," said Uncle Whiskers.

"All is well that ends well and really, Pinkie Whiskers, you never did such a wonderful thing before and you probably will never do such a wonderful deed in your life again, for you have set the Tree-Fairy free. Look over there and you will see her," said Sammy Woodchuck.

Pinkie Whiskers looked and he was so surprised that his little mouth flew open, and I am ashamed to say that he stared too. Yes, he actually stared at the Tree-Fairy.

The Tree-Fairy smiled and came dancing over to him. She bowed and said, "I want to thank you for saving my life. If

it had not been for you, I would not be standing here in this beautiful sunshine."

"Do tell us how you came to be in the tree trunk, won't you please?" begged Twinkle.

"To be sure, I will tell you," laughed the Tree-Fairy. This is the story she told:

"In Fairyland there are Witches as well as Fairies, just as on Earth there are bad people as well as good people.

"I had always been very friendly with the Witches and they were as kind to me as they could be until one day I went to visit the Witch Discontent. She was never satisfied with anything and never smiled or laughed.

"You know I love everybody and everything. I am happy all the day long and I never fret or worry. On this day I was so happy over the beautiful sunshine and flowers that I was singing and dancing.

"The Witch Discontent could not help but feel my happiness and bye and bye she forgot to whine and scold and actually began to sing with me. She had never been known to sing a note before.

"Then I told her a joke and she laughed. My, how she laughed! We were having the best kind of a time when one of the other Witches entered and found the Witch Discontent enjoying herself.

"The Witch Discontent was so angry to be caught having a good time that she flew into a terrible rage, and drove me from the house."

CHAPTER VII

WHEN the Tree-Fairy told of the Witch Discontent's rage, she shuddered, then she continued:

"The Witch Discontent not only drove me from her house, but she chased me and she screamed at me every step of the way. I could run faster than she and I reached my home first. I ran into the house, closed and bolted the door.

"I was just in time for I had only finished locking the door when the Witch Discontent threw herself against it.

"When she found that the door was locked she was more angry than ever. She tore her hair and jumped wildly about. She put her mouth to the key hole and screamed:

" 'I will punish you yet, you just wait.

I will sit here in front of your door until you come out.'

"Now, I knew that she could not harm me unless she looked me in the eye and made certain passes with her hands, so I decided right then and there that I would stay in the house and keep the door locked.

"All day long the Witch Discontent sat in front of the door and all the while her rage grew and grew until she was a terrible sight. I peeped out of the window at her several times and each time I was glad she did not see me.

"Night came and she was still there. I went quietly to bed and soon fell asleep. It was bright daylight when I awakened. My first thought was one of happiness and then I remembered about the Witch Discontent and I was eager to see if she was still sitting outside of my door.

"I tip-toed over to the window and looked out. I could not see her so I leaned

further out and almost instantly a rough hand grabbed me and dragged me right out of the window and dropped me on the ground.

"I found myself facing the Witch Discontent. She had been waiting under my window for this very chance. She shook me and then held me very tight while she looked me in the eye, made passes and hissed:

" 'You wicked Tree-Fairy! I will drive you from Fairyland. I will send you to Earth and imprison you in a tree forever. You shall never come forth into the sunshine again or dance, laugh or sing unless I will it. Now go,' she screamed as she flung me from her and made more strange passes with both hands.

"That is all I can remember until I found myself imprisoned in the heart of yonder tree. I could not stir. I was fitted into the tree as if I had grown there.

"I do not know how long I have been

in the tree, for I slept a great deal, but always when I was awake I sang little songs of joy to myself and kept a merry heart. But best of all, I never ceased to love the Witch Discontent in spite of what she had done to me.

"You know that love always conquers hate and it was love that sent the man to cut down the tree and when he was called away, it was love that sent Pinkie Whiskers and you, my dear friends, to finish the work and free me."

As the Tree-Fairy stopped talking there were tears of gratitude and happiness in her eyes. She looked so sweet and beautiful that her new friends wondered how anyone could ever have been unkind to her.

"You certainly have had a very hard time and I am glad that we could help you out of your prison," said Uncle Whiskers.

"Why are you called a Tree-Fairy if you have only lived in a tree here on Earth?" inquired Pinkie Whiskers.

The Tree-Fairy laughed merrily as she replied: "Bless your heart, I have always lived in a tree. My home was in a tree in Fairyland, but the tree was hollow and I had several rooms. As I told you I even had a door and a window."

"Fairyland must be a wonderful place," sighed Twinkle. "I wish that I could make you a visit when you are back in your own home once more."

The Tree-Fairy put her arms about him and said, "I would love to have you but it is impossible. You could never reach there. I must be going now, but I will never forget your kindness to me and I will always watch over you all and turn your trouble into happiness. In fact, I will tell all of the good Fairies to help you."

"Pinkie Whiskers, you shall always be protected in time of need. Some day when you are in danger, I will save you as you have saved me and now good-bye, dear friends, good-bye."

CHAPTER VIII

WHEN Pinkie Whiskers reached home, he told Mother and Father Gray all about how he chopped down the tree and how the beautiful Tree-Fairy was freed from her prison. Mother Gray said:

"My son, you have had a very wonderful experience, but please be careful what you do and where you go. Country life is very different from city life and you are very young."

"Yes, mother, I will be careful, but I want to do everything that anyone else does," replied Pinkie Whiskers.

"Now, now," spoke Uncle Whiskers, "let the boy have his way. I am sure that he is a genius. If Pinkie Whiskers does all of the things which he longs to do, he will be ready for anything. Why, he may be able

to write a book about the wonderful things he sees and hears or perhaps he may paint a beautiful picture."

"That sounds very nice," replied Mother Gray, "but I am afraid something dreadful will happen to him, while he is doing all of these things."

Just then Billy Jay flew onto the window-sill and called out, "I invite you all to come with me down to the creek. I want to show you city rats something that you have never seen before."

"Oh, goodie!" cried Twinkle.

"Oh, goodie!" cried Winkle.

"Hurrah! hurrah!" shouted Pinkie Whiskers.

"Now, children, please stop shouting while I tell you my plan," begged Mother Gray. "It will soon be supper time, so how would you like to take our supper with us and eat it down by the creek?"

"Oh, yes, a picnic, a picnic! Let us have

a picnic!" shouted the three little brothers at once.

They all hurried about and helped Mother Gray put up the lunch and very soon they were all scampering off to the creek for their picnic.

Billy Jay flew ahead of them and they followed him to a place in the creek, where the shore curved and the rocks sheltered the water so that it was as quiet and as still as a pond.

Pinkie Whiskers, Winkle and Twinkle raced down to the creek and looked down into the water. To their amazement, they saw their faces reflected: Pinkie Whiskers cried out:

"Is this the surprise? Is this what you wished to show us?"

"No," laughed Billy Jay. "You look again and forget about your reflection and tell me what you see."

They all looked again and this time they

saw funny little creatures wiggling and swimming about. Pinkie Whiskers asked:

"What are they and where are they going?"

Mother Gray and Father Gray looked and they also were surprised, for they had never seen or heard of anything like them.

Billy Jay was thoroughly enjoying himself, for it is always fun to show something strange to your friends. He laughed as he answered:

"They are tadpoles and they are not going anywhere. They just swim around and around here near the shore, for this is their home just as the cheese factory is your home."

"Will they always be small like this?" inquired Pinkie Whiskers.

"Bless your heart, no," replied Billy Jay. "They will grow into great, big frogs."

They all watched the tadpoles swim

about until Mother Gray said: "Come, children, we will have our supper now."

They found a very nice place to eat and everyone was so hungry that they began to eat at once.

Pinkie Whiskers kept thinking of the tadpoles and without saying a word he slipped away from the others and went back to the creek. Right beside a big rock, he found a fish rod and net.

He picked them up and began to fish. In a moment a tadpole swallowed the hook. Pinkie Whiskers jerked him out of the water and put the net under him.

"You are the little tadpole I have been fishing for," he cried.

The little tadpole was so amazed that he could not speak. He just hung and flopped on the hook.

CHAPTER IX

THE longer that Pinkie Whiskers looked at the tadpole, the more proud he grew to think that he had caught him.

At last the tadpole found his voice and said, "Oh, please put me back in the water. I want to go home."

Pinkie Whiskers jumped when the tadpole spoke. Someway he had not thought about a tadpole having a voice or being able to talk.

"No, my little tadpole. I am not going to let you go back home. I am going to take you to my home. I will put you in a glass of water and you can swim as much as you please," replied Pinkie Whiskers.

"I have a mother and father just as you have and I do not want to leave them. I

want to stay here and I will stay here," said the tadpole and he jumped about so lively that Pinkie Whiskers had all he could do to keep from falling off the stone.

"Stop pulling my fish line. Stop pulling it, I say," cried Pinkie Whiskers.

The little tadpole paid no heed to Pinkie Whiskers' demand. In fact he jumped and pulled all the harder and faster.

The first thing Pinkie Whiskers knew, he had slipped off from the stone and was up to his neck in the water.

But Pinkie Whiskers was not the kind to give up a prize easily. My, no! He remembered to hold fast to the fish rod. The little tadpole swam away as far as he could and tugged and tugged at the line.

Pinkie Whiskers was nearly pulled over in the water, but just in time he threw out his hand and caught hold of the rock, then using all the strength he had, he managed to climb up onto it.

Once more he pulled the tadpole free from the water and slipped the net under it. He was panting for breath but he said:

"Now, little tadpole, I am surely going to take you home with me, but I will not put you in the glass. I will fry you and eat you for my breakfast."

The poor little tadpole was so frightened that he screamed, "Help! help! help!"

Now Father Frog had gone back on the shore to stretch himself in the sunshine and to see what he could find to eat.

He was returning to the creek when he heard his son call for help. He was very much frightened for he knew that the tadpole could not get up onto the rocks himself and yet the call for help came from the rocks.

Father Frog hopped as fast as he could, but his heart beat so wildly that he could not jump very far at a time.

When he reached the creek he stopped a moment to look and what he saw struck him with such horror that he could not move. His legs would not work.

About this same time Mother Gray went to give Pinkie Whiskers another piece of bread and cheese. To her surprise he was nowhere to be seen. She called and called, but Pinkie Whiskers was too far away to hear.

"Father Gray, you must go and find Pinkie Whiskers," she cried. "Run as fast as you can. I am afraid that he is in trouble or mischief."

"Now, now," said Uncle Whiskers, "you worry too much about Pinkie Whiskers. He is a fine, big boy and can take care of himself."

"That may be true but I am going to find him now," said Mother Gray as she ran for the creek.

Father Gray said, "Wait a moment and I will come along with you."

Winkle cried, "I want to come too."

Twinkle cried, "I want to come too, please wait for me."

Uncle Whiskers grumbled, "Well, I never did see such a fuss in my life. I have not had enough to eat yet, but I guess I will join the hunt for Pinkie Whiskers anyway."

Billy Jay laughed and said, "I will go with you, Uncle Whiskers. We can finish our supper when we return."

So off they all ran after Pinkie Whiskers and although Mother Gray was worried, she never suspected what serious trouble and danger Pinkie Whiskers was in.

CHAPTER X

AFTER the first shock, Father Frog became very angry with Pinkie Whiskers. His legs began to move once more and he made long hops and jumps until he stood beside Pinkie Whiskers. He puffed out his white throat and croaked:

"Chug-e-rum! chug-e-rum! What are you doing with my son and why did you pull him out of the water?"

Pinkie Whiskers looked at Father Frog and when he saw how big he was, felt rather small and timid himself, but he raised up to his full height and said:

"Is this little tadpole your son? I fished for him just for the sport of it and I did intend to take him home with me."

"Chug-e-rum! chug-e-rum!" roared Father Frog, "drop my son at once."

The way Father Frog demanded Pinkie Whiskers to drop the tadpole made him very determined not to do so. It was very naughty of Pinkie Whiskers, and afterwards he was most sorry for having been so rude, unkind and stubborn, but then it was too late.

Pinkie Whiskers said to Father Frog, "I will not drop your son. He is my little tadpole now and I am going to take him home and fry him for my breakfast."

"Chug-e-rum! chug-e-rum!" growled Father Frog. "You shall do nothing of the kind. Don't you know that frogs and tadpoles have feelings and hearts as well as yourself?"

"Poof! poof!" scoffed Pinkie Whiskers. "I don't care. I am going to take my tadpole home with me anyway."

Father Frog did not say a word. He just jumped against Pinkie Whiskers with such force that the rod flew out of his

hand and the little tadpole went flop back into his watery home.

Pinkie Whiskers fell flat upon the stone and when he scrambled to his feet, there beside him stood Father Frog. In his hand he held a long green reed, which he had pulled out of the creek.

Pinkie Whiskers thought that Father Frog intended to whip him with the reed and he begged, "Please do not whip me. I will never touch your little tadpoles again."

"Indeed you will not touch them again, for you will not be here to fish for them."

With these words, the Frog grabbed Pinkie Whiskers and threw him up onto his back. He then put the reed around him so that he could not possibly get away.

Pinkie Whiskers kicked and kicked. He jerked and jerked, but the reed was so strong that he could not break it. He tried to bite it with his teeth, but he could not reach around far enough.

Father Frog hopped up onto a big rock that was hanging right over the creek. Pinkie Whiskers screamed and kicked some more, but it was of no use.

"Oh, please put me down, Mr. Frog," begged Pinkie Whiskers.

"Indeed, I will not. You showed my son no mercy and now you cannot expect me to show you any kindness," replied Father Frog.

"But he is back in the creek with his brothers and sisters now," said Pinkie Whiskers.

"Yes, he is back home with a fish hook in his mouth and I will have a hard time to get it out. Besides it was not you or your kindness that put him back home. It was because I made you drop him," growled Father Frog.

"What are you going to do to me?" cried Pinkie Whiskers.

"I am going to dump you into the water," replied Father Frog.

"Oh, mother! mother! father! father! help me! Come quick and help me!" screamed Pinkie Whiskers.

Mother Gray and all of the others heard him scream and they ran as fast as they could to his aid. Billy Jay could fly faster than the others could run, and he flew as fast as he could, but even he was too late.

Right before their very eyes, Father Frog leaped into the creek with Pinkie Whiskers on his back.

The last they saw of Pinkie Whiskers was his feet kicking the air and his little red coat-tails flying.

Mother Gray threw herself down on the rock and sobbed, "My dear Pinkie Whiskers, I will never see him again."

Winkle, Twinkle and Billy Jay all cried, too, but Father Gray blew his nose and wiped a tear from his eye as Uncle Whiskers said, "That boy will come back all safe and sound."

CHAPTER XI

WHEN Pinkie Whiskers struck the water, he closed his mouth and his eyes tight. He did not open his eyes until he felt Father Frog swimming rapidly down the creek and he wondered where they were going.

He kicked and kicked, but the green reed held him so fast that he could not free himself.

Father Frog swam on and on until they came to the mouth of the creek and the creek flowed into a great, rushing river. Father Frog let loose of the reed and as Pinkie Whiskers fell off from his back, said:

"Now, my little rat, you must take care of yourself. I am going home to take your

fish hook out of my poor little tadpole's mouth. Good-bye."

The water was so deep and it raced along so swiftly that Pinkie Whiskers was very much frightened, but suddenly a beautiful, soft voice whispered in his ear:

"Do not be afraid. I am the Water-Fairy and I will help you because my dear friend, the Tree-Fairy asked me to do so. She told me all about how you saved her."

Pinkie Whiskers was so amazed and delighted that he forgot that he was in the water and started to speak. Of course, the water poured into his open mouth and he began to sputter and choke.

The Water-Fairy pushed him to the top of the water and patted him on his back until he was all right once more, then she said:

"I will make it possible for you to stay down under the water and breathe and talk just like a fish and then you will never choke again."

Pinkie Whiskers smiled his thanks and the Water-Fairy made some passes and, sure enough, he could breathe, talk and swim under water just like a fish.

"Look! look!" cried the Water-Fairy. "There is a ship in the distance and it is headed this way."

Sure enough, a beautiful, big, white ship was coming down the river. It was coming so fast now they could see men moving about on her.

Pinkie Whiskers took out of his pocket his white handkerchief and waved it around and around his head.

"Ship ahoy! ship ahoy!" he shouted.

"It will do you no good to signal the ship," said the Water-Fairy. "It would never stop to take a rat on board. Oh, dear no! You will have to get on the ship without anyone seeing you."

Pinkie Whiskers did not wait to hear any more. He swam for the passing ship.

When he was even with the dragging rope he tried to catch it with his teeth, but he was not quick enough and the rope slipped out of his reach.

Again and again he tried and at last he made a quick jump and landed right upon the rope. He just clung to it as tight as he could with his feet and rested.

CHAPTER XII

THE rope was one which the sailors had put out to tell them how many miles an hour they were going. This rope had a wonderful wheel at the end of it which kept twisting and turning in the water.

Every now and then the rope would turn suddenly over and poor Pinkie Whiskers would go under the water with it and nearly fall off. At last he was rested and climbed the rope to the ship. When no one was about he jumped aboard.

Of course, he did not know which way to go, but there was a pleasant smell of cooking in the air and he followed this smell.

He soon found himself in a big kitchen with many people hurrying about. There

were cooks with white caps and aprons and waiters with white jackets.

Pinkie Whiskers kept very close to the wall and ran until he saw a white jacket hanging on a nail.

Pinkie Whiskers saw that the jacket had pockets, so he ran up the side of the wall and hid in one of the pockets. He had just nestled down for a little nap, for he was very tired, when along came the owner of the jacket. He took it off from the nail and put it on.

Pinkie Whiskers did not know what to do, but he decided to keep very still. The waiter took his tray of food and went into the dining room. Pinkie Whiskers peeped out of the pocket and saw many tables with people about them.

Pinkie Whiskers' head was still out of the pocket when the waiter went up to a table to serve a lady. She saw Pinkie Whiskers and screamed, "A mouse! a mouse!"

Now, Pinkie Whiskers knew that he was a rat and not a mouse, so at first he did not think that she meant him, but when all of the ladies jumped up from the table and started to run, Pinkie Whiskers jumped from the pocket and ran too.

He hid behind the leg of a big chair and did not move until he felt the ship stop and saw everyone going ashore. He started to go ashore too and as everyone had bundles and baggage, he picked up a small hand bag, an umbrella, a can and a cage filled with butterflies, grasshoppers and a lady-bug.

He had only gone a short way when the door of the cage flew open and the insects flew out.

"I never had so much trouble in all my life," complained Pinkie Whiskers.

He ran after them and caught as many as he could and put them back into the cage for he wanted to take them home as presents to his dear ones.

CHAPTER XIII

PINKIE WHISKERS found it very hard to travel over the country road with all of his baggage. He caught his feet in the cage and fell over it several times.

He did not know the way home and he had to ask every little wild creature that he met where the cheese factory was.

At last he met Billy Jay, for Billy Jay had gone out to search for him. Billy Jay felt sure that Pinkie Whiskers was not drowned and when he met his little friend coming down the road he was not even surprised.

"Hello, Billy Jay!" shouted Pinkie Whiskers. "You see that I am coming home."

"Hello, Pinkie Whiskers!" cried Billy

Jay. "I never was so glad to see anyone in my life. Let me carry something for you."

"All right, you may carry my hand-bag, if you wish," said Pinkie Whiskers.

Now that Pinkie Whiskers had company, it did not seem any time at all before they reached the cheese factory.

Pinkie Whiskers opened the door and walked right in, just as the family was eating supper.

Mother Gray screamed and ran to kiss her son. Father Gray, Winkle, Twinkle and Uncle Whiskers stood by and waited for their turn.

"Now, children, let Pinkie Whiskers eat his supper before you ask him any questions. The poor little fellow must be very, very hungry after his long journey."

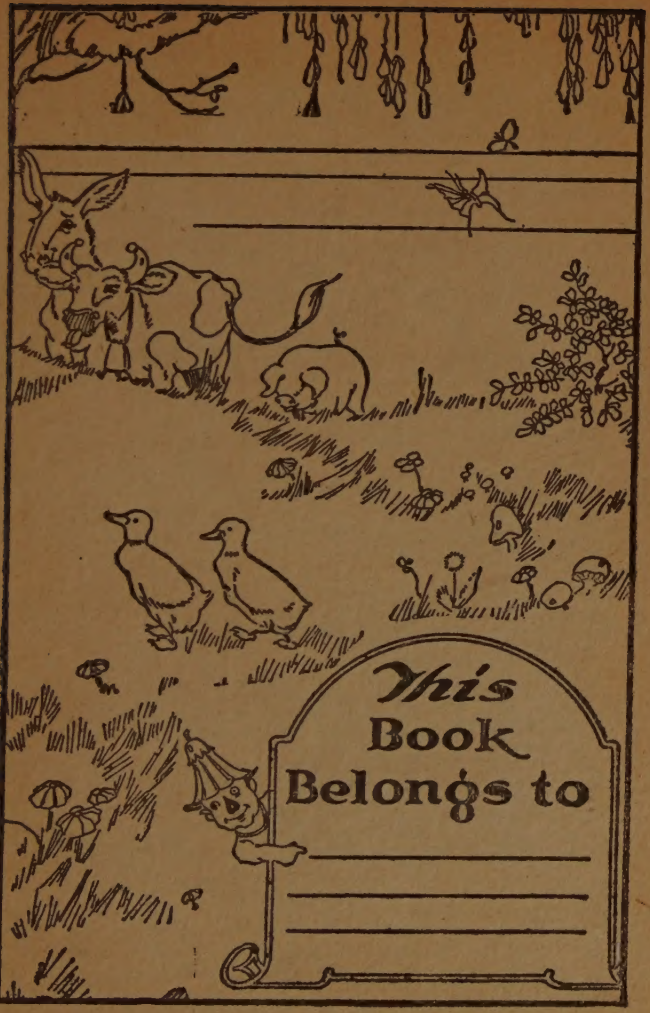
Pinkie Whiskers ate and ate, then he told them all about the good Water-Fairy, who was a friend of the Tree-Fairy and

how she had asked the Water-Fairy to help him.

Winkle, Twinkle and Billy Jay were so amazed by Pinkie Whiskers' story that they stood and stared at him with big eyes.

Uncle Whiskers shook himself and said, "There now, Mother Gray, didn't I tell you not to worry about Pinkie Whiskers?"

"And, yes," cried Pinkie Whiskers, "you said perhaps I might write a book and I have already started one. So you see that you are always right, Uncle Whiskers."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